

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed March 3, 2003 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 52-57 are canceled. Claims 39, 42, 45, 51, and 59 have been amended. Claims 31-51 and 58-63 are pending in this application, with claims 31, 39, 42, 45, 48, 51, and 58 being the only independent claim. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, as herein amended and in view of the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action mailed March 3, 2003, the Examiner notes that claims 59 and 62 are dependent on a non-elected claim 53 and are therefore withdrawn. Claims 59 and 62 are rewritten to depend from independent claim 58 and are therefore now allowable on a pending claim.

The specification was objected to because the term multiply rove is not understood. The term rove is the past tense of reeve which means to pass a rope through a block, i.e., pulley. In this case the cable is multiply rove or reeved through the drawworks a plural number of times. Regarding page 7, line 13, the term lacuna has been removed from the text. Page 17, line 17 has been amended to state that the well is not shown. In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully requested that the objection to the specification now be withdrawn.

Claims 36-38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite because claim 36 depends from claim 1 which is canceled. As suggested by the Examiner, claim 36 is amended to depend from claim 31. In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 36-38 as indefinite now be withdrawn.

Claims 31, 32, 34, and 46 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,018,588 (Haberer).

Claims 31-35, 41, and 46-50 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over EP 0 243 210 (EPO '210) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,224,005 (Dysarz). Claims 36-38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over EPO '210 in view of Dysarz and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,578,911 (Hashimoto).

Claims 58, 60, 61, and 63 are allowed. Amended dependent claim 59 and 62, being dependent on independent claim 58, are allowable for the same reasons as independent claim 58.

Claims 39, 40, 42-45, 51, and 52 were found to contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In view of the allowable subject matter, claims 39, 42, 45, and 51 have been rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that 39, 42, 45, and 51 and dependent claims 40, 43-44, and 52, are allowable.

Before discussing the cited prior art and the Examiner's rejections of the claims in view of that art, a brief summary of the present invention is appropriate. The present invention relates to a drilling machine for exploratory drilling and for producing wells. The drilling rig includes a base having a foot connected to a live ring, a top drive, a guide for guiding movement of the top drive along the longitudinal axis of the base, and a gripper for gripping and guiding a pipe, the gripper being moveable perpendicular to the base axis.

Haberer discloses an anchor drilling implement which includes a vehicle having a body 11 pivotable about a vertical axis on a ring 13. A top drive 20 is located on a mount 18 that

is pivotally connected to a sliding carriage 19 which is mounted on the body 11 (see col. 2, lines 21-23). Therefore the drive 20 is guided on a mount 18 that is pivotable about a horizontal axis relative to the base 11. This fails to disclose a base of a drilling machine having a guide for guiding a top drive along a longitudinal axis of the base and having a foot connected to a live ring as recited in each of independent claim 31. In contrast, the part of Haberer on which the top drive is guided does not have a foot connected to a live ring. Rather the base 18 is pivotally mounted on the sliding carriage 19. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 31 is not anticipated by Haberer.

Regarding their rejections of independent claims 31 and 48 as unpatentable over EP '210 in view of Dysarz and Hashimoto, EP '210 discloses a modular drilling machine having a mast 56, 60 mounted on a platform 52 that is mounted on a skid 20. The mast is pivotally mounted on the base and the base is pivotally mounted on the skid (see Fig. 2). A pipe boom 90 is used to move tubulars 96 into and out of the drilling string (see page 10, lines 10-16). If the mast is considered the base, EP '210 fails to teach or suggest that the foot of the base is mounted on a live ring, as recited in independent claims 31 and 48.

Dysarz discloses a truss ring for offshore drilling in which a drill works 11 is mounted on a much larger superstructure 1, 2, 3 having legs 4. The super structure includes a circular skid rail 30 and parallel skid rails 40. The drill works 11 is mounted on a drill floor 50 which is mounted on the parallel tracks 40. The parallel tracks 40 are mounted on the circular tracks 30 so that the entire assembly including drill works 11, drill floor 50 and parallel tracks 40 are rotated on the circular tracks. This larger superstructure fails to teach or suggest mounting the foot of a base of a drilling machine on a live ring as recited in independent claims 31 and 48.

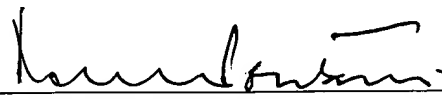
Hashimoto also fails to teach or suggest what EP '210 and Dysarz lack. Hashimoto discloses a pivotal drilling structure having a base that pivots about a horizontal axis. Accordingly, Hashimoto also fails to teach or suggest a live ring connected to the foot of a base, wherein the base includes a guide for guiding the longitudinal movement of a top drive, as recited in independent claims 31 and 48. In view of the above remarks, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 31 and 48 are allowable over EP '210 in view of Dysarz and Hashimoto.

The application is now deemed to be in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is solicited.

A check in the amount \$336.00 is enclosed in payment for the addition of 4 independent claims in excess of three.

It is believed that no additional fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application; however, if any additional fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,
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